[](http://www.google.co.nz/imgres?q=pasifika+patterns&hl=en&gbv=2&biw=1366&bih=595&tbm=isch&tbnid=7rTei56JGk-1-M:&imgrefurl=http://www.mga.org.au/exhibition/view/exhibition/8&docid=-G0e13lAQzHdyM&imgurl=http://www.mga.org.au/library/exhibition/1269416835_image_ft_tapa_pattern_500wide.jpg&w=452&h=300&ei=QINET-3GCYmSiQfthMyPAw&zoom=1)

Ogbu, J. (1991) **Immigrant and involuntary minorities in comparative perspective**. In M.A. Gibson & J. Ogbu (Eds.), Minority status and schooling: A comparative study of immigrants and involuntary minorities (pp.3-33). New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.

It is a fact that, Māori and Pasifika educational needs tend to be lumped together and treated as one. However, since embarking on the **Teaching Pacific Island Students in a NZ Context** paper, I have become aware that there are major differences in Māori and Pasifika needs and attitudes towards education.

The paper above – the first reading for the **Education issues for Pacific Island Peoples in NZ** – explains why this is. The main points made in the paper are:

* Ogbu identifies an important difference between cultural minority groups in education, which he names “**voluntary**” and “**involuntary**”.
* Ogbu does not mention refugees because, whilst they are an important group in our society, they do not fit into either category and therefore are not relevant to Māori or Pasifika experiences.

[](http://www.google.co.nz/imgres?q=pasifika+patterns&hl=en&gbv=2&biw=1366&bih=595&tbm=isch&tbnid=ot5p0DScqCtWuM:&imgrefurl=http://www.trademe.co.nz/crafts/fabric/cotton/floral/auction-411045876.htm&docid=Yz8QfMC-W0fpuM&itg=1&imgurl=http://images.trademe.co.nz/photoserver/tq/2/188868102.jpg&w=352&h=264&ei=QINET-3GCYmSiQfthMyPAw&zoom=1)

* **Voluntary** groups are people who chose to come to New Zealand and are **immigrants**. (Pacific Islanders fit into this group.)
  + They believe they will be better off financially, have more opportunities and get a better education.
  + A better education for their children and money to send home to the islands is the main reason most Pasifika people come to NZ
  + They have a point of reference – their home land – to refer back to and can see that (in western terms) they are better off.
  + They see difficulties in the ways/language of the new country as barriers to be overcome.
  + They believe if they work hard to learn the language and get a good education they will do well in their new society. and these can be done with hard work
  + Therefore they have a positive attitude towards schools and encourage their children to work hard and do well.

[](http://www.google.co.nz/imgres?q=pasifika+patterns&hl=en&gbv=2&biw=1366&bih=595&tbm=isch&tbnid=ufQNx4L1SnV9sM:&imgrefurl=http://www.lockhart.co.nz/&docid=Nw_Lu8oczmP5yM&imgurl=http://lockhart.co.nz/images/products/zoQiDP_standingtallblue1.jpg&w=295&h=400&ei=QINET-3GCYmSiQfthMyPAw&zoom=1&iact=hc&vpx=297&vpy=214&dur=1606&hovh=262&hovw=193&tx=79&ty=128&sig=100340995473989056099&page=5&tbnh=126&tbnw=93&start=109&ndsp=30&ved=0CNIEEK0DMH0)

* **Involuntary groups** did not choose to be minority cultures; they have become so through slavery, conquest and colonisation. Māori obviously fit into this group.
  + They naturally resent the loss of their former freedom
  + They do not have a homeland as a point. There is nothing left to compare their lives to – only memories of the past.
  + The barriers they perceive in gaining an education – rather than being challenges to overcome – are seen as further oppression from the ruling dominant group.
  + Points of difference between the cultures are seen as “symbols of identity” that are maintained to give a social identity and sense of self-worth
  + Mistrust of the dominant group is passed on to their children who expect the education system to fail them.